

Beware of migrating animals

November 1, 2012



Now that daylight is growing shorter and nights and evenings are cooler, large game animals have begun their seasonal migrations and are more likely to travel during commuting hours and move through recreational areas (parks and hiking trails).

Keep an eye out for wildlife on roadways and in recreational areas, and take extra caution while driving or hiking. Deer-vehicle collisions occur disproportionately in the one to two hours following sunset.

Tips to avoid accidents:

- Elk and deer generally travel in herds; if you see one, expect others nearby.
- Elk and deer are most active between dusk and dawn when temperatures are coolest – it's also the most difficult time to spot them.
- These animals make split-second decisions. A seemingly calm deer can instantly change into a frightened animal that tries to cross the road.

- Deers' eyes are located on the side of their heads, allowing a 310-degree view. That's great to perceive possible danger approaching, but means they have very poor depth perception.

When encountering elk or deer near roads, drivers should:

- Brake firmly. Don't swerve into the other lane.
- Honk the horn.
- Flash high-beam headlamps.
- Drive a few miles slower than the posted speed limit.
- Continually scan roads for wildlife.
- Always wear your seatbelt.

Those who encounter injured and or aggressive wildlife should contact their local police department. Avoid calling 9-1-1 unless it is a true emergency.

People shouldn't intentionally put food out for bears or other wildlife or toss food in the forest. Remember to cover refuse containers, and keep possible food sources away from areas where bears and other wildlife have easy access.

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